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THE UNION
OF THE
British North American Provinces
CONSIDERED,

IN A LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE
CITIZENS OF BRITISH AMERICA,

BY
OBITER DICTUM,

WITH
Remarks by "The London Times" on the St. Lawrence
Route, & Subsidies to Ocean Steamers.

Dum loquimur fugerit invida aetas.

MONTREAL:
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1859.

TO MY READERS.

MY FRIENDS,

The following is a reprint from "*The Montreal Gazette*," very slightly altered, and the *nom de plume* adopted, the same as I have been in the habit of using when treating of Political and Economical Subjects, both in Europe and America. My wish has been to say much in few words—avoiding all unnecessary diffuseness. The subject, if fully discussed, would fill volumes.

Your very faithful Servant,

JAMES ANDERSON, F.R.S.E., &c.,

Editor of "The Farmer's Journal and Transactions of the Board of Agriculture of Lower Canada"—Author of the "Currency and Corn Law Letters," "Philosophy of Duty," &c. &c.

Montreal, October 26, 1859.

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TO THE
CITIZENS OF BRITISH AMERICA.

MY FRIENDS,

Permit me to address you in the same terms I have heretofore made use of in reference to the most momentous political movement, which can ever affect the Northern Continent. Now is the proper moment when the public attention should be intently concentrated on a subject of such magnitude, and pregnant with such important results to you and yours, not—like party issues—for a day or for an hour—but in perpetuity. Let us disabuse ourselves—let us fling from us with merited contempt, such paltry drivellings, and for once let us comport ourselves, as becomes the heirs of such a mighty destiny. It has been abundantly apparent to every close observer, that the policy pursued by the British Government, of late years, towards the British American Provinces, has been deliberately adopted and persevered in with the studied view of indicating a predetermined resolution on the part of the Mother Country to render the Colonies, as nearly as possible, independent; believing that the feeling of loyalty and legitimate national pride—the former still so fondly cherished by the many—together with the concurrent advantage of unrestrained mutual interchange of benefits, would form a bond sufficiently strong to hold the countries together securely; for, after all there is no bond so permanent as that formed by mutual attachment, strengthened by mutual interests. The frowns of power too frequently stimulate to rebellion and resolute opposition,—and treaties are too often not worth the parchment on which they are written. But though the Governor General and his Lieutenants are still sent out from England—beyond the outward forms of administration—there is little to distinguish the Provincial Governments from independent local Sovereignties. In all matters most essential to the prosperity and happiness of the people—except as regards our external relations, as we shall hereafter have occasion to explain—the action taken depends upon the representatives of the people themselves; and the tendency of the entire policy of the Mother Country has, of late, been to throw upon the Colonies the duty and responsibility of governing themselves.

When the writer of these remarks, some years ago, returned to the Mother Country from these Colonies, he did not shrink from the duty of representing in the proper quarter the naked truth, availing himself of the opportunity afforded him for the purpose:—he stated advisedly, but boldly and unreservedly, what he, with a vast majority of the respectability and intelligence in these Colonies, believed to be the only safe line of policy which could be pursued towards the British American Provinces by the Mother Country advantageously to both; and he has rejoiced in

being permitted to look on attentively whilst each old and fondly-cherished error of administration has been, in turn, voluntarily abandoned and renounced, and due respect paid and consideration given to that pervading feeling amongst the Colonists, which inclines them naturally to wish for the control of their own affairs,—and this, too, frankly and voluntarily conceded on the part of the Mother Country, without the meanness of tolerating the shadow of any unworthy fear or suspicion that such well-timed generosity might eventually be repaid by a demonstration of indifference towards England. So far from this, that she has had a direct assurance from many intelligent and influential men resident in these Provinces, that they would, personally, by no means regret to aid in the complete incorporation of Canada with England, provided a fair share of representation were accorded to the former; but however this may be, it is certain that the vast majority would view with abhorrence any project which should have for its purpose a severance of Canada from the British Empire.

Nevertheless, the idea of combining the British Colonies of this Western hemisphere into one vast Federal Union has taken a firm hold of the public mind both in the Provinces and in the Mother Country—in fact, in anticipation, it seems all but a *fait accompli*. Nor can the ambiguous position of Canada be, for a moment, concealed whenever and wherever this subject comes under discussion.

The natural position of this group of dependencies in the Northern extremity of the American continent, indicated the necessary formation and gradual growth, at no distant day, of a great Northern Confederacy, which, from the elements that enter into the structure of society in British North America, must, when consolidated, display a strength, a cohesion, and a durability, corresponding to the materials of which it is composed.

Would it not be unreasonable to expect that an assemblage of young and thriving countries, so situated as to be evidently designed by nature to assist and supply and interchange amongst themselves those numerous advantages which separately, are a comparative nullity, but jointly might be the source of untold wealth and power, can long remain neutral or indifferent to the manifest advantages which must, of necessity, follow a Union of these Provinces.

Can it be held as presumption if such a nation desire should emanate from a people inhabiting a region larger than Europe—covering a wider space than the neighboring confederated States, capable of sustaining a population,—if fully peopled and its resources developed,—of a hundred million in comfort and independence—and of absorbing the surplus population of Europe for years to come—with the wide Atlantic on the one side, and the gold-bearing regions—the diversified mineral wealth—including the inexhaustible coal mines and the expanse of the Pacific on the other—containing already within its bounds a population of 4,000,000 inhabitants, a respectable beginning for a youthful nation, and far exceeding the population of the neighbouring Republic when she ventured to assert her right to independence, and to walk confidently and alone and bear herself with a bold front before the assembled commonwealth of nations.

Deeply impressed with such views, at an interview had lately by the Nova Scotian delegates with the Colonial Secretary, Mr Labouchere, they

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were informed that Her Majesty's Government had no desire to interfere with the determination to which the Colonies themselves might come on a point so immediately affecting their own interests, and that if they should be of opinion that re-union would advance their prosperity, the Government would oppose no obstacle to the accomplishment of their wishes. Mr. Labouchere's own opinion was stated to be, that he doubted whether the Union of Canada and the Lower Provinces might not embrace too wide a circle for convenience and efficiency; he believed that the Union of the Lower Provinces would be highly beneficial, and might tend greatly to improve their position, and assist their progress. This declaration of the perfect freedom of the Colonies to decide this important question for themselves seemed to be all that could be desired from the Government, while as yet neither the Legislature nor the people had given any unequivocal expression of opinion on the subject. So that it remains with the Colonies to take the next step themselves, and no time will be lost in approaching this important subject in a deliberate and systematic manner. It is unnecessary to detail the progress since made by the Government and more recently by the opposition. Suffice it to say that the principle of Union seeing universally admitted as desirable—but parties have not decided as to details.

It being then now universally admitted even by our interested neighbors, that the state of things which existed some 15 years ago has so completely changed,—the disquiet, disturbance and dissatisfaction have so completely passed away—the sentiment of the Canadas has become so thoroughly British, as scarce to admit of a possibility of their ever becoming American—of their becoming lost in that Great Republic which seeks to absorb Central America, Mexico and Cuba in its confused agglomeration of States; and unless timely checked by the formation of the Great Northern Confederation, would never seek to stop the march of conquest until the boast of her enthusiasts should be realized, and the universal Continent should crouch beneath her unequal and despotic yoke—it would say require the aid of no prophet to foretell the result, could she partially succeed in satiating her insatiable thirst for conquest.

To have talked of such a Union some years ago would have been premature. The communication between the separate communities was slow and infrequent—the habits of the people, their religions and languages so dissimilar—that it was necessary to wait patiently for the occurrence of the events of the last few years before anything could be done towards changing their territorial and political relations. But such a change could now be effected with comparative ease, and with the certainty of success; and a Confederation of stately proportions could be initiated, combining the essential elements of solid prosperity and healthful and vigorous growth. The Colonial Secretary has declared that he only awaits to hear from Canada before announcing the decision of the British Government, touching a monopoly, which, however venerable by its antiquity of two centuries is by no means well adapted to the development of a country's resources in these days of progress; and public sentiment in Great Britain and the Colonies has already anticipated the determination of the Government. The recent concessions and admissions of the Colonial Office to the Seaboard Colonies, present further proof of the fixed determination of Britain to acquiesce in the expressed wishes of her faithful colonists.

The amalgamation of the Provincial Governments, and the perfecting of their inter-communications, would obviate the difficulty under which Canada at present labors for five months in the year, when she is periodically compelled to seek an outlet for her produce through the United States; and so complete is the revolution of sentiment within the neighboring States, that, in prospect of such a Union as we have been indicating, the State of Maine, by the voice of one of her public organs has expressed her willingness to become a party to the Great Northern Confederation. And the progress of improvement has at length pointed to a railroad across the Continent within the British dominions, having its western terminus at Fucus Straits, and leading directly through a rich mineral and settlement country, great part of the route, to the gold-bearing region of Vancouver and the West.

The exhaustless fisheries of Newfoundland will afford ample employment to thousands of hardy fishermen, and, the nation to which they shall belong, will provide a great nursery of seamen—a hardy race inured to the perils of the sea, capable of furnishing a sustained supply for a national navy, whose flag will yet be respected throughout the world.

But in the event of war,—disunited as the British provinces at present are,—how would Canada be placed? No doubt her brave and hardy yeomanry would defend their country with becoming spirit. Shut out during the winter, except by a long and tedious journey through the wilderness the want of a through communication with a British seaport through British American territory would be felt as a national calamity—and no time will be lost in supplying this defect. But however distant the evil day may be—and we heartily pray that long it may be delayed—it is wise to be prepared against any event. Energetic progress, and a tide of prosperity, with unmistakable manifestations of strength and vigor, will at times serve to repel the rapacious spoiler; and every pains should be taken to renew and perfect our emigration system, in order the more speedily to increase our numbers, which is at this moment, and ever has been, lamentably faulty and deficient. It will not do to retain a tattered system of motley patchwork, tinkered by each adventurous Minister in succession—each, no doubt, doing his best at experimentalising, and, in his piety, adding his contributions to the shapeless, inchoate and unworkable mass of regulation and legislation, which puts one in mind of the old joke of rules and regulations for regulating the rules that rule the regulars. It also puts one in mind of the venerable departmental farce which has so often been acted to the life in high places, and played off on our expectant people, yeilded much-ado about nothing.

It is painful to witness the bootless attempts of one Minister after another, professing much, but after all perfecting a substantial nothing. No doubt it might well have been said of more than one: "*Projicit ampullas et sesquipedalia verba*"; but nevertheless verifying the truth of the old proverb: "*Non a quovis ligno fit Mercurius*." But the country will not be satisfied with a system of regulations which can only be regarded by a practical man as a heterogeneous colluvies of unmanageable and inefficient contradiction. Therefore *nemo tenetur ad impossibile*; but it is equally true that *non cuius homini contingit adire Corinthum*. It is pretty well understood that the present Minister only awaits a loud and unmistakable expression of public opinion on this important subject, to justify him in advising a radical revision of

the existing regulations, and to warrant him in perfecting a comprehensive system, suitable to the present and prospective wants of this country: for, without such a decided expression of public opinion, he would not, in the present financial position of this Province, feel inclined to recommend any immediate increased expenditure, even for the accomplishment of such an important public object.

In the West we will speedily see spring into life a colony presently peopled by a mild and inoffensive race of Indians, with a rapidly increasing population of white men on the Island of Vancouver, possessing the finest harbor in the world, and which will yet serve as the station of the naval force in the Pacific. Here we have an ample supply of coal and timber, and of the latter the Puget Sound Company in 1856 shipped 5,200,000 feet to Australia, China, South America and the Sandwich Islands. The coasts abound in fish of every description; the mineral wealth of the island is great, consisting of iron, copper and gold; the oak and fir are of enormous growth, and beech and maple are present, though in less abundance. The soil is most fertile, producing from 25 to 45 bushels an acre, under the present inefficient system of tillage. When the great natural resources of the West and East become developed, who can predict the magnificent destinies awaiting this great Northern Confederation? Who could set limits to its commerce? Who could venture to estimate its power? When the Mother Country shall have, in the course of nature, grown old and feeble, her child may live to take her by the hand, and lead her and assist her with pious and becoming care. The student of history will not blame us for glancing at such a possibility. The progress of the West cannot fail to be rapid, and its prosperity secure. We shall have, besides the contributions from legitimate emigration, which, to the land of gold, will be enormous, (just think of Australian Victoria) and a great number of fugitives from California and the Western States. Besides abundant extraneous evidence, we have the declaration of Lord Stanley that a valuable gold field lies between Thompson and Fraser Rivers, which continues productive and its ramifications are becoming developed, the returns from Vancouver are ample; and it is not difficult, when we reflect on the influence exerted by her present masters, to account for the concealment of evidence on such an all-important question. She will afford the best winter station for the North Pacific whalers; the inhabitants of the Washington territory on the main-land will come to her markets for supplies, and a large trade will spring up with the Russian territories in North. The salmon and herring fisheries are already very productive, and there is a large export of the produce; and this might be indefinitely extended. A glance at her geographical position and her natural resources, when the transfer from the Hudson's Bay Company to the British Crown next year shall have been completed, will convince the most sceptical thinker, or the mere casual observer, of the bright prospects of the nascent colony, and her importance to any confederacy to which she may belong. We have dwelt somewhat longer on this part of the subject than we intended, because it is not, as yet, generally so well understood.

The opinions we are expressing have been long sincerely held by us, and were never concealed at any time,—but strenuously, yet cautiously urged on every convenient opportunity. They have not been rashly

formed, so that we can venture to solicit a patient hearing alike from friend and opponent. We are free to confess that we have bestowed long and careful consideration on the subject, and we are gratified with the assurance that we are now borne out by the acquiescence of most men of eminence and discretion, who are thoroughly acquainted with the state of the Colonies and the feelings of the people. Such men are not actuated by any reckless love of change,—by any reprehensible revolutionary motive, but are sincerely anxious to substitute a solid tie of union for slender attachments, which are already strained to the utmost.

It is not to shadow forth any unworthy spirit of discontent or petulant dissatisfaction that we adventure the remark that the true lesson to be derived from the severance between the Mother Country and the neighboring States would seem to be, that in dealing with the Colonies the utmost tenderness and caution on the part of the Imperial Government is required, so that there shall be no meddling or unnecessary interference on the part of that Government with matters purely local; and we think, beyond all doubt, that the Provinces ought to be suitably represented in the Imperial Legislative Assembly of the Realm. Her Colonial possessions are indispensable to Great Britain—providing an exodus for her surplus population; and this very emigrant population at a future day, if their national memories have been, by kindly treatment, preserved, endearing and warm, will be bulwark and support,—making common cause with her in every necessity, promulgating her policy, exulting in their unity, and holding fast by her imperishable traditions. In Canada and British America allegiance should not require to be perpetuated by coercion, but should flow from feeling natural and hereditary. Is it not full time then, with a full assurance of the existence of such feeling, that the occasion should be improved,—that all blind obedience to former usage should be dispensed with,—that the influence and privilege of mature years should be respected by an indulgent mother,—that the position and prospective greatness of her British American offspring should be regarded in a liberal, candid, and enlightened spirit; and it is worthy of mature consideration whether the period has not arrived, when they ought to assume a position of constructive independence, anticipatory of the high destiny which so certainly and, talking of nations, so immediately awaits them.

The idea of Colonial Representation is not a new one. During the discussion on the Reform Bill of 1831, Mr. Hume brought forward a motion for Colonial Representation; and it is now about to be renewed by parties on both sides of the House in the Imperial Parliament. By such means only can the Colonies be permanently preserved to the British Crown. Such alone is compatible with their welfare and the dignity of their position. And if this mode of conservation and restraining caution is not taken in time, the result will inevitably be, that the distant extremities will drop off from the body of the nation, from their own unwieldy and ponderous weight. Would it not be better to take care that they be bound together by strong and permanent ties, so that British America, covering an area larger than all Europe, should be united by a voluntary and indissoluble bond—so that by degrees their tariffs, their currency, their laws, their interests should become identical and in common, enabling her to prepare to assume a commanding position in the commonwealth of nations,—and if need be to afford available assis-

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tance both in men and money, if ever any attempt should be made to invade the palladium of freedom and christianity,—in fact to be the true representative of British freedom and civilization on this Northern Continent—as if Britain herself had taken one step in advance in her progress towards the distribution of freedom and enlightenment amongst the countless Isles of the Pacific.

The growing importance of our Colonies is undeniable—but their weakness is equally apparent from want of union. The free population of the United States from 1841 to 1851 has increased 37 per cent., the colored 27 per cent. During the same period the growth of the two Canadas have been 59 per cent., and of Upper Canada 104 per cent. In Upper Canada the agricultural produce has quadrupled in ten years preceding 1851, and its shipping has doubled in the same period. The consumption of British manufactures since 1852 is on an average of £2 6s. a head, that of the United States only £1 2s. a head. Such sustained prosperity is perhaps unexampled in the history of the world. Our national force is in the course of being thoroughly organized, and in the event of a Union of the Provinces would be capable on an emergency of great expansion, and would be available in time of need for the service and support of Britain. Surely this is worthy of close attention; and we sincerely hope that a proper system with the Colonies may be adopted without loss of time, so that the Mother Country may not again be put to the discreditable shift of hiring the assistance of foreign mercenaries—trusting her well earned and proud reputation to the keeping of hirelings drawn from the banded scum of Europe. Would it not be wiser to place her trust in blood and kindred—in the inheritants of her sacred traditions and memories?

At this point we have to beg the favour of our readers, whoever they may be—whether consenting or differing with us in opinion—not to rise impulsively, if we should differ with them on one or more points, and cast away our *brochure*—but courteously beg of them to be seated, and do us the kindness of politely hearing us to the end. Our great anxiety is to do away with all asperity of feeling on every side, and all we claim is a fair and dispassionate hearing. Our interests are now becoming almost in the literal and universal sense, National and Reciprocal. Soon will the time come when the inhabitant of the British Isles may purchase and hold for his own enjoyment and recreation an estate in Canada, as he now does a Highland moor. Soon will the Highland shooting mania pass bye. The sport will become too common place. The fashion will—like those before it—speedily pass away. We must cross the broad sea to partake in the sports of another continent—with the buffalo, the wappati and the elk for our chase, and the boundless prairie and the forest for our hunting grounds.

Let there, then, be no show of hesitation on either side. Let the alteration of policy be at once proclaimed, and there can be no doubt it will be hailed on all sides with enthusiasm. The primary mind of the Canadian Legislative Assembly was long ago prepared for the incorporation of the British American Provinces. There can be no doubt the Provinces are agreed in again recommending it. The absence of union deprives them of consentaneous action, both political and administrative,—they are discouraged by anomalies innumerable,—they will reflect with no bitterness on the exclusiveness of liberalism to the reform of

1832, but will be contented with receiving, under any new distribution of the franchise, a certain share of representation, whilst they will be permitted to assume, by union, that position before the world so well becoming the children of such a parent. Ten or twelve years ago we prepared a detailed scheme for the Union of the British American Provinces more full and complete—because more compendious—than that of Uniacke and Sewell. It will be, no doubt, forthcoming when this question shall assume a more practical shape. This Union was recommended by Lord Durham, and the propriety, if not the necessity, of its adoption is very ably argued in his Lordship's well known and valuable Reports. We have already said it has received the sanction of the Legislative Assembly of Canada, and the proposal was well received out of doors, and is extremely popular in the Lower Provinces.

British Americans are especially anxious that there should be no unnecessary delay in according this boon, as they are incessantly tantalized by the overshadowing might of the Mother Country and the neighbouring Republic, and are particularly sensitive and conscious of their unmistakable inferiority in the estimation of the world. Let an American citizen go where he pleases—he is feted and beflattered, particularly if he should be so fortunate as to hold any public office. But, at present, a Canadian is passed over without distinction when from home, and when at home he is cast into the shade by the surpassing magnificence of his neighbour. Across the lines he sees men emerging from the humblest stations and becoming the tenants of places which force them to a level with the first potentates of the earth; honored, respected and flattered—while British America has seldom been heard of—is regarded with inferiority—and her citizens pass unhonoured and unnoticed. Why should it be so? If she were enfranchised and united, she would speedily assume a distinguishing rank;—and as the exclusive *jus togæ* distinguished the Roman citizen in every quarter of the world, and stimulated him to uphold the national reputation, let us contemplate with becoming anxiety and pride the speedy approach of the hour when the distinction of being a British American Citizen will be a passport the world over, and claim instant recognition and respect in every corner of the earth. Does our territory doom us to any comparative inferiority? Does our descent justify us in brooking it unnecessarily, when there is no desire on any side to degrade us with a reflection so derogatory?

At present there is no means—no opportunity of gratifying the lofty aspirations of the powerful intellect—the original thinker—the experienced and liberal minded statesman. He is precluded, from his position, from gaining experience or indulging in large and comprehensive views. Personal ambition is thwarted, and the intellectual are driven from necessity to exercise their talents in the petty game of party and faction to the exclusion of nobler aims and more worthy objects. Such a Union as we recommend would satisfy the natural cravings of praiseworthy ambition. It opens up a larger field, and directs high talent to nobler aims and objects. It would teach us to look to our past national traditions for our antecedents, and to our adopted country and its glorious destiny for their future. It would give us something to cling to,—something to honour,—something to love. And this would stimulate us to deeds which would gain us honor, respect and regard in every free and Christian country.

Union is strength. What would these Provinces have already done had this Union been consummated? Removed as they are socially and politically from each other,—their free commercial intercourse impeded,—separated by troublesome commercial barriers as if they stood in the relation of independent countries,—in what direction are we to look for the elements of strength. Literature and mechanical inventions are retarded, and the general interests would seem to demand loudly and convincingly a firm and speedy Union. The prospectus of the Pacific Railroad is already issued. It may be regarded as a *fait accompli*. It is a necessity,—being merely a *portage* connecting Europe with the countries of the Pacific and farthest India. It cannot be delayed. So that the Southern Continent and its *disjecta membra* will be bound together with bands of iron and that speedily,—and every deprecatory discouragement on the plea of inconvenient distance will speedily vanish, and the realization of the mighty scheme is already at our doors.

But, on approaching the question more closely, we are led to a critical view of the dissimilarity between the political condition and circumstances of the British North American Colonies and those of any confederation of States which has ever existed. The aim and object of any such confederation has been with reference to *foreign* relations. The United States Government has been entrusted with a more extensive power of supervision over individual States and more numerous rights of interference in the internal affairs of the collective body than have ever been entrusted to any other Federal Government, viz.:—The exclusive power to make war and to raise and equip armies; to make peace, and conclude treaties of commerce with foreign powers; and, to carry out these arrangements, the farther power of levying taxes.

The powers of the Federal Government to interfere with the affairs of the Union are few and inconsiderable. The principal are, controlling the Post Office and enacting Patent and Copyright laws. Besides these, authority over all territory belonging to the Union, but not included in any individual State, is vested exclusively in the Federal Government. Now, the prerogatives of the Federal Government could not be extended a hair's breadth beyond the limits prescribed by the constitution, without bringing about a collision with the individual States. Is it not clear, that under our present relations to the Mother Country the possession of the principal of these rights would amount to an impossibility,—the rights in fact which give a standing and position to the Central Government,—the right to raise and equip armies, and conclude treaties: and, the only power left would be the management of the Post Office, and legislating on questions of Naturalization and Copyright, and it could not levy taxes beyond the actual requirements of its own Civil List. Such a government would speedily become a *betise* and a *ridicule*. But, in consenting to such a Union, Britain would probably consent to bestow upon these Provinces the charge of providing and sustaining the Naval and Military forces necessary for their security—to check internal disorder and repel foreign aggression; and this would secure to them a certain degree of moral weight throughout the confederation. And in the arrangement made for the erection of British Columbia (New Caledonia) into a separate Province in the meantime,—it is contemplated that a future demand will be made for admission into the Union which

is a pretty distinct foreshadowing of the views entertained by the Imperial Government.

In the event of these concessions by the Imperial Government, still we do not see on what terms a Federal Constitution could be formed in these Provinces without constant disputing and misunderstanding,—without the occurrence of conflicting rights and rival interests,—without contentings between Imperial, Provincial and Federal authorities *ad infinitum*; and we do not think, it practicable, such a Union would be at all desirable, or suited to the genius of the people or the steady and permanent development of the mighty resources of British America.

No such objections, however, are applicable to the plan of a Legislative Union. What we would recommend for Canada would be the very reverse of what obtains in the constitution of the neighbouring Federation. There each State being itself sovereign, only so much power is delegated to the Central Congress as is needful for strictly specified purposes common to all the States, and the individual States may take any course of legislation they please on all except the few excepted subjects. But, in Canada, we would have the sovereignty, or what should stand as its representative, entire in the Central authority, and the local divisions, unions of counties, counties, and municipalities exercising their delegated functions, being bound to submission to the Central authority when its legitimate powers were exercised, and conform to the established principles of the Federal legislation. We have a wholesome dread of the multiplied dangers and weakness of centralization when carried too far, and we have abounding confidence in the vigour, flexibility, safety, and permanence of local institutions. Such a Union or Federation could take place immediately, and would require no change whatever in the constitution which each individually now enjoys, or in relation to the Mother Country. No important political movement could be more simple—more pregnant with important results—nothing could enlist public opinion on its side more certainly, or be consummated with more heartfelt enthusiasm. No greater change would be required than definitively settling the location of the Seat of Government in the meantime. But the prudence of changing that locality at any future time, in compliance with the requirements or general wishes of the inhabitants, should never be allowed to impede or retard such an important movement as the Union of these Provinces. Get this accomplished in the first place without fail and without delay,—and do not take up time in fruitless cavilling about the location of the Seat of Government. Internal individual reforms have already taken place, or are progressing; and the principle of Municipal Corporations, which has already been attended with success in Canada, furnishes the best security against injurious centralization. Thus, under the extended Union advocated, would immediate and ample security be given for the protection of local interests; and much more effective and reliable than the cumbrous existing machinery by which each Province is allowed, as at present, to manage its exclusive local affairs. But the great point to be gained under such an arrangement would be, that thenceforth no apprehension need be entertained that any one of these municipalities would, at any time, become inconveniently influential or dangerous, so as to interfere with the smooth working of the machinery of government; and it would be impossible to conceive of any other

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which could be continued with a similar recommendation. This would ensure equality and identity of general interests while local interests would be left in the safe keeping of the local councils. If it should be necessary to club the interests of several counties for the purpose of carrying out any local improvement in which they could show a mutual interest, a provision might be made similar to that now so much desiderated and counselled in Britain, by which they might unite together for such important public purposes,—and for such purposes provision might be made for the extension of the principle wherever good cause could be shown for its proper application. Would it not be prudent, when we are left to pick and choose for ourselves, not only to select the best model, but to shape it so as to suit our tastes and necessities—making choice of the best materials at will?

To those croakers who would object to our proposal, instancing the unsucccess of the Canadas, we would reply, that the safety and success of the principle depends upon its extension,—and that its limited application could afford the only possibility of misadventure. Are we to be deprived of our birthrights, of the extension of our legitimate authority? Is the progress of this great country towards distinct nationality to be retarded by the intense impertinence of such a motley and insignificant brotherhood? Soon will they be contented to hide their diminished heads, and be glad to mingle, silent and rebuked, amidst the rejoicing crowd of a happy and united people.

It is well that all public questions, pregnant with such important results, should be well weighed and deliberately considered beforehand; so that if need be, prompt and decisive action may be taken at any time, without unnecessary delay.

The British North American Provinces are not blind to the large expenditure necessarily consequent on the keeping on foot a standing army and efficient navy and the other concomitants and requisites of an Independent Nationality. Neither are they regardless of Britain's powerful aid in times of actual warfare,—the moral influence among nations of the prestige of her mighty name,—which may long prevent open hostilities in North America, and which never shone forth with more brilliance or splendour than at the present moment.

Then, why not have precisely the same Legislative Union of the several Provinces above suggested,—the people governing themselves in all matters where no Imperial interests are at stake, levying and expending their own taxes, with their representatives in the Imperial Parliament to give their countenance to the latter,—enacting their own laws—with a Prince of the Blood Royal of England exercising the functions of Chief Magistrate,—not in the character of Sovereign, but Viceroy?

Canada and the North American Provinces would thus enjoy the protection of England as heretofore, and the prestige of her mighty name: whilst a more intimate Union would be realized and cemented, and one safe and secure step taken in the direction of Independent Nationality,—when the time appointed by the decree of Providence shall fully come round.

Canada is now as free as she could desire to be,—except in name; and the arrangement above pointed at,—when the late change of government in the Indian dependencies is borne in mind—is proposed

with view to general consolidation, and to the creating and fostering of reciprocal interests, destined to terminate in the perpetuation of the most enduring and permanent ties.

Such an arrangement would be a perfect security against abrupt and headlong change; and the country would thus advance towards the goal of Independent Nationality at a measured and deliberate pace; and would, at the appointed time, be prepared to take her place amongst the commonwealth of nations with an easy grace and a feeling of becoming confidence, which could not fail to secure to her, at the appointed time, a cordial and respectful welcome.

I have the honor to be,

Your obedient servant,

OBITER DICTUM.

Montreal, October, 1858—Reprinted October 26, 1859.

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THE "LONDON TIMES" ON THE ST. LAWRENCE ROUTE AND SUBSIDIES TO OCEAN STEAMERS.

(From the Times Aug. 6, 1859.)

In most ages of mankind the destinies of States have depended on the track of commerce. Cities have been made and unmade, and kingdoms elevated or depressed, by simple and silent changes in the course of trade. The mighty ruins in Asiatic plains mean often nothing more than that the adoption of some new route by a line of caravans left a proud and stately emporium stranded and desolate. The ancient ports in the basin of the Mediterranean whose historical names arrest every traveller's attention have become what they are because commercial revolutions took away their shipping, and with their shipping their vitality. Venice, Lisbon, and Amsterdam have felt in latter days the ebb of trade, while its flow has been sufficient, as we see, to create in San Francisco, Singapore, and Melbourne such interests as in former days could never have been conceived. There was once a time, when the critical region of the world was India, and when upon the communications between that country and Europe the fortunes of intermediate States seemed permanently to turn. But India has now been compelled, if not to relinquish, at any rate to divide her pre-eminence. There is another region with more important commerce, though a less romantic history. Instead of the diamonds of Golconda and the silks of Bengal, we see the breadstuffs of Ohio and Michigan absorbing the expectations of Europe. The West is eclipsing the East,—all the more so because it is new, limitless, and inexhaustible. We may trade with America for centuries and yet find it more productive than India is now. That prodigious continent is a perfect nursery of States, and the link connecting the two worlds is strengthened by the fact that more goes to the commerce between them than gold and goods. We supply America with people. The tide of population, which from the earliest ages set in from the East, is now carried onwards to the West more marvelously than ever. It is transported across the Atlantic, and then again pushed to the western extremities of the new continent, until nothing but a second ocean separates it from those eastern highlands in which our race took its rise.

We are not indulging in these reflections without a practical object. At this moment the route of commerce far more important than that by which Augsburg or Bruges was left to rise or fall is trembling in a political balance. How are the products of Western America to reach the expectant consumers of Europe? By what track are the swarms of European emigrants to be carried into the spacious and fertile provinces of the West? Through what channels is this interchange of exports to pass? What cities are to be enriched; what States to be elevated; what nations to be aggrandized? There is a double choice before us. The alternative is Canada or the United States, and the rivalry for the noble prize has been gallantly maintained. Unfortunately, the fight is not a fair one, and England stands chargeable with unwittingly damaging the chances of that competitor whose interests she might naturally be expected to prefer.

The geographical position of Canada places its territories between those of Western America and the Atlantic Ocean. The great river St. Lawrence and the vast inland lakes with which it is connected offer a natural and convenient highway for the traffic of the West. Were it not for the ice of winter and certain difficulties in the navigation, it is probable that Quebec would have become the great emporium of this commerce in spite of all competition. But the people of the United States, fully alive to the interests at stake and animated by the importance of the contest, omitted no efforts to give this lucrative traffic a turn towards the south. A slight deflection would do the work, and carry it off to the ocean by New York and Boston, instead of through the waters of the St. Lawrence. At first the Americans succeeded. While Canada was engaged with locks and lighthouses, canals and tugboats, the United States pushed on their chain of railways, and Boston and New York became fairly the *termini* of Atlantic navigation. Canada, however, was keen, resolute and unconquerable. She held on her course with steady pertinacity, and the British Government encouraged her exertions by guaranteeing a loan. At last, after an expenditure of millions, the route was complete, and the course of traffic to the mouth of the St. Lawrence was as clear as to the American ports. But here there arose another difficulty. The Americans had, as it were, possession of the ocean. Liverpool had been linked by great steam navigation companies to New York and Boston; in those ports, therefore, would commerce still tend—that of corn from the West, that of men from the East. Not to be outdone in the struggle, Canada then built steamers of her own, and suddenly appeared with an Atlantic fleet, like the Romans against the galleys of the Carthaginians. Thus, at length, the field seemed fair, and if, other things being equal, Canada had really the best ground, now was the time for Canada to win.

In these days, however, commerce, like war, is an affair not merely of courage and resolution, but of loans and subsidies. Canada found arrayed against her not only steamers, but subsidized steamers—not only rival lines, but rival lines established and maintained by the contributions of her own natural protector and ally. The Cunard line and the Galway line both running from British, not to Canadian, but to American territory, were founded upon subsidies from the British Government, so that our own loyal dependency was likely to be worsted in the race through the aid which we ourselves contributed to her competitors. What was Canada to do? She had already pushed abreast of her rival at all points; she had opened communications, constructed always, and launched a steam fleet. There was only one thing more to be done, and that was to subsidize her own line, as we had subsidized the lines against her, and this she did. She had spent £650,000 in building her steamers; she now paid £45,000 a year to put them on a level with ours, and the enterprise has succeeded. The Canadian line is as good as the Cunard line, and it would be hard to say more. One of its vessels—the "*Hungarian*"—has actually made three consecutive voyages across the broad Atlantic in less than 28 days altogether.